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### ***published in***

Time and Society  
2001

### ***DOI (link to publisher)***

[10.1177/0961463X01010002013](https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X01010002013)

### ***document version***

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

### ***citation for published version (APA)***

Sabelis, I. H. J. (2001). Time Management. Paradoxes and Patterns. *Time and Society*, 10(2/2), 387-400.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X01010002013>

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## **Time Management: Paradoxes and patterns**

Ida Sabelis

*Time Society* 2001 10: 387

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# Time Management

## Paradoxes and patterns

Ida Sabelis

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**ABSTRACT.** The topic of time management inevitably emerges when researching concepts of time in organizations. And, as we live in a society where we deal with organizations all the time and in a variety of forms, we are continually confronted with the way in which time is managed in an 'organizational' way. This article departs from a critical overview of time-management literature and confronts the assumptions therein with the experiences of a (female) chief executive, managing her time. By taking time management literally, it is shown that underneath, other temporal markers are essential and that concepts of time management necessarily provide a perspective that is risky and too limited. **KEY WORDS** • home and work time • rhythmicity • time management • time(s) in organization

H: Is that really me?

I: Yes, that's what you told me about your life, your household, the travelling . . .

H: Well, all right – I can't find any mistakes . . . but the way you have pictured and combined things . . . the way I manage my time . . . all the things I do every day and the patterns . . . it makes me tired to read it. And the fact that there is so much rhythm there . . . that is something I would never have guessed. And I must admit: it's true!

(Telephone conversation between the respondent and the author discussing feedback of the following text).

In reflecting upon concepts of time management we are, at first sight, dealing with an understanding of time after clocks and watches, plannable and – like other resources – aimed at optimization, or rather *maximization*, of the available time for work and, increasingly, for other areas of life. Because of the dominance of linear clock time, which is taken for granted in our everyday understanding of time, it is not easy to investigate the interwoven layers of other

temporal traits and aspects. When time management is the focus of research, one realizes that one's own assumptions are subject to the same process of rationalization and (linear) explanation of the idea of *managing* something that seems so obviously plannable. One is forced to question commonsense notions, to reframe ideas and to make new connections. One way out of this dilemma is to try to reconstruct the processes by which time is managed in theory, training programmes and in the everyday practice of people 'managing their time'. Some of the concepts currently featuring in the debate on time management are examined in this article and combined analytically with the findings of a research project on chief executives in The Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> The aim of the research was to discover how chief executives 'survive' in the current complex, accelerating and turbulent world of management and organization. Within the project, the topic of time played a major role. Using different methods (direct and indirect questioning, observations and documentary analysis in order to reconstruct their life stories), I investigated the temporal dimensions of the everyday practice of chief executives and their organizations. One of the emerging patterns in the research deals with time management and I show that it is possible to address the plurality of time by deconstructing its linear characteristics in order to reveal the multidimensional nature of the topic.

First I discuss some of the prevailing theories of time management. I then use the story of Hannah, one of the participants in the survey, as an illustrative example, focusing on her solutions and dilemmas in managing her time.<sup>2</sup> Throughout this narrative, we can detect patterns in the life of someone who manages her time well in relation to ideas, dreams, tensions and paradoxes.

### **Reflections on Concepts of Time Management in Theory**

Time management as a discipline has been in and out of fashion since the 1960s. At the moment, we are again facing hype about time management. Influenced by debates on 'burn-out', new laws for working conditions, the ongoing conflict over part-time work and a tightening labour market, old time-management books are re-read and new ones added to the shelves. As a spin-off from my research about time awareness among chief executives, I regularly keep track of developments in the field of time management. This has become a hobby and I have noticed that, in my pile of books on the subject, nothing really changes over the years. What meanings does time management encompass? To what kind of norms and values is it linked? What contradictory elements are there in the way we wish to manage our time? And what implications do the answers to these questions have for our daily practices? Is it possible to *discover* the multidimensional elements underlying what is considered to be a linear, rational topic?

It is generally accepted that Alec Mackenzie, an American organization specialist, coined the term 'time management' in the early 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Since then, authors of time management literature have followed in his footsteps to the extent that even tables of contents show similar key words (compare for instance Seiwert, 1988; Covey, 1999; van der Horst, 1992; Koning, 1991; Wilson, 1995). Usually time management books start off with a philosophical quotation or a more or less abstract story about time, followed by a series of chapters in which a step-by-step method is proposed in order to gain improved management of time. This ranges from insights into priority setting, defining 'A, B and C tasks', ways of delegating and standardizing work, the 'Pareto principle' (i.e. we tend to spend relatively more time on minor tasks versus less time on important ones) and models (charts) to improve our time performance. Remarkably, there is hardly any reference to Alec Mackenzie, although he obviously designed the standard. A similar pattern of concepts can be noticed in books on newer topics dealing with temporal difficulties. In titles like *Positive Stress Management* (van't Hof, 1988; Keenan, 1998; Makin and Lindley, 1991), *Time Ecology* (sic! – Gaedemann, 1992) and in some books dealing with the risks of burn-out (Wilson, 1995), the association of time management with 'stress' could point to the use of time management as an approach to be applied in new contexts (i.e. in organizational consultancy dealing with health issues). Is this a case of old methods for new problems? It could be argued that either the original principles of time management are now being applied on a broader level and in wider contexts, or that they were not, hitherto, used properly. Yet, some changes can be detected over the years. Authors are increasingly coming to the topic from a philosophical viewpoint. And increasingly more pages are devoted to this perspective; compare for instance Gaedemann (1992), Witjas (1998) and Covey et al. (2000), with whom the 'spiritual' and philosophical part now takes roughly 80 percent of the text. There is a reason behind this philosophical stance: deep and abstract thought seems to invite people to reflect upon what someone 'is actually doing with his/her time' and many people consider this to be 'relaxing'. But whereas in the early books this aspect can be looked at as a justification for (relaxed) rational planning, the newer books devote so much space to this aspect of reflection that there must be something else behind it. From the perspective of content there seems to be a shift from general philosophical statements (i.e. references to St. Augustine or some of the ancient Greek philosophers) to the creation of what may be called a 'spiritual' atmosphere. Here the individual is addressed directly: of course, it is we who cannot manage our time, dividing it up in parts to be filled (especially Witjas, 1998; Covey et al., 2000). And, as we are all so different, it is increasingly important to know about our personal time profiles (i.e. rhythms, differences in need for rest, etc. – see Seiwert and McGee-Cooper [1998], Covey et al. [2000]). However, after some chapters about individual time awareness, which

provide tools for identifying our needs and qualities, we are again invited to concentrate on rational planning. Whereas in the works of Mackenzie (from 1962 on) we find that 'managing time' is something to be learned and for which anyone can be trained, Witjas (1998) proposes the development of an 'individual time profile' and the need to discover 'what is important to you, in your life'. This shift reflects the process of individualization in our society. Changes in perspectives on work and organization are possibly also intertwined with the changing focus in time management literature. However, on the whole, there is no fundamental change in the basic assumptions made by authors writing about time management: the newer works continue to stress the importance of reflecting on the design of one's 'future' (I return to the topic of future later) and of ruthlessly devoting oneself to rational planning. A possible change is the suggestion that 'it is an individual choice to take it or leave it', as is illustrated in the story of Hannah. All this strengthens the conclusion that however good the created atmosphere, time management remains focused upon, and bounded by, a very rational clock-time view. A major change is that 'self-management' has become increasingly important.

Another angle from which to examine the underlying meanings conveyed by time management derives from an intercultural point of view. In most European languages, the term 'time management' remains without translation. If I try to find a translation in my own language (Dutch), the sense of controllability from the term 'management' comes to the fore. This is probably why the English term is used universally: to a certain extent it hides the implication of what it means 'to control' time.<sup>4</sup> But what are we trying to control? From time management literature and from discussions with colleagues (organization consultants) it becomes clear that in the end time management means to control, to plan, to colonize and to map our future, despite the presentation of a broader (world) theoretical view as promoted by Seiwert and McGee-Cooper (1998) and Covey et al. (2000).

Sometimes the need for time management is related to the assumed acceleration in our society (Hof, 1988; Witjas, 1998). Technological and economic developments, with their fast recycling of products on markets, seem to enhance the feeling that we are collectively speeding up, at work and at home, in education and in health care, in politics and in business. We accept acceleration as a phenomenon of modern life and are forced to reflect on our use of time. However, clock time or rational time seem to be our only orientation – *management* of time remains the key concept.

In this context, some other reflections can be made. Our attachment to clock time includes the notion of 'conjunction' instead of just control. For instance Held and Nutting<sup>5</sup> argue that (clock) time awareness in our society contains an element of 'conjuring the unbearable reality of finiteness', which contradicts our belief in control (1998: 32 ff.). We cannot bear this idea. In order to recon-

cile the tension between belief in controllability and the experience of finiteness, we tend to rely on clock time as the ultimate solution – and actually there is nothing more finite than this image. But images can be very powerful. One way to look behind them is to explore how people ‘handle’ the idea of time management in everyday life. This leads us to the example of Hannah<sup>6</sup> who is one of the chief executives in my research. As a professional, she fully understands the art of time management.

### **Hannah’s Times**

She is always busy; she is always in action: she radiates ‘busyness’ and she was like this from childhood. Hannah was born in a Mediterranean country, the eldest of two daughters in a well-to-do and cultured family. Her father, from one of the north European countries, was in the medical profession; her mother worked in the family company. Hannah was a bright student. Her initial interests were in law and interior design. However, she chose economics because she was convinced of the importance of becoming independent and, as she put it herself, she had always had a very ‘practical orientation’. Ambition and enthusiasm for her professional field prevented her from noticing political changes in the 1960s – ‘I didn’t have the time, working seventeen hours a day’. After her studies in northern Europe, she went back home and started her career in the then very new field of automatization. After some years of sometimes rough working experiences in the Mediterranean area, she joined a British company and was transferred to The Netherlands. There she met her husband-to-be, decided to stay in the country and made her major career move when her daughter (an only child) was a year old. Two years ago, she was appointed international senior manager with a multinational IT company. She is an ambitious woman. She is aware of the position of women in the IT business as well as in the senior positions of big firms. However, the only choice she seems to have is first to ‘adapt’ to this ‘man’s world’ and only later to express her criticism, which she does whenever possible.

Hannah manages people all over the world for the company, in ever-changing alliances, as is the custom in this global interactive business. Colleagues shift back and forth in the roles of partners and competitors – knowing how to deal with shifting alliances and changing allegiances is pivotal. This means she uses dealing with time as a coping strategy, either in the context of finding and taking care of partnerships or in the sense of developing strategies for product development or marketing.

Hannah travels a great deal, by car and plane. She conducts teleconferences from home and has a well filled daily, weekly and monthly schedule. At least one week a month she stays in a hotel suite in another continent; for two weeks

she is on the road elsewhere, and she spends at the most one week in her office in The Netherlands. She is also a mother, a partner, a friend and so on – how many roles can a woman have? She enjoys good food, drinking and cooking. She likes sports and music and organizes concerts at home for family and friends. She leads the life of an intelligent person, highly skilled and happy with the world and her steep career path. The demanding atmosphere of the macho world in which she lives does not seem to affect her very much. The only thing about which she sometimes complains is the lack of female colleagues. If occasionally she does meet female senior managers, she hardly ever gets the opportunity to share common problems and thoughts or to reflect on a life where a woman has so many roles. There is no time for that, or they do not take the time.

Hannah stresses the importance of a well balanced mix of knowledge, experience, ambition and the development of an individual, personal style. She genuinely admires someone who works part-time, but couldn't imagine herself having more time off, for instance to have a month of vacation or to spend more time at home: 'I wouldn't know what to do. When Judith was only three weeks old, I wanted to go back to work!'. She distinguishes herself from most of her male colleagues by, as she states, emphasizing personal relationships. She also knows her customers, subordinates and colleagues on a private level. And since all this wonderful communication technology is available anyway, why not send a birthday message with a business plan or ask about a child's welfare in the corner of a fax? She cites an experience with a female colleague, who, she noticed, did not contribute as usual during a teleconference:

'... And it turned out that she didn't feel at ease because her children were home alone! Well, I said to her, she should have told us! We all have these kinds of things from time to time. And I think it is important not to keep quiet about it. Men can also learn from expressing these things – do you think they never have similar experiences? If you don't share a thing like that, people may misinterpret the situation; they may doubt your commitment or jump to the wrong conclusions about your performance.'

Obviously, Hannah has an elaborate time-planning system and a secretary who supports her in this area. Information flows coming to her are thoroughly filtered, so she cannot be overwhelmed. Email messages are deleted if it is unclear where they come from. In order to get a message to her a special code is needed. Her husband and daughter have direct access: a little fax message in the evening provides contact with home when she is far away. And how can you have a meeting with people in two different continents at the same time? Well, by getting up very early in the morning and sitting at the computer, (well dressed of course): one party will be at the end of the working day and the other will just be starting. Everybody knows how to contact Hannah if necessary – her



daughter's school, her friends and family; everything is arranged in detail and adjusted to her almost non-stop working week. Hannah is physically strong, although sometimes the lack of natural time orientation after some weeks of travelling gets to her. After several jet lags a pattern of acclimatization occurs and a quarter of an hour's sleep in an airport or a little nap after a good meal seem to make up for loss of sleep.

How does Hannah explain time management from her position as a chief executive? First of all she stresses the importance of strong support at home. After a television programme about work-related stress and burn-out (in which she and some of her colleagues took part) she compares her position with a burnt-out colleague who 'hadn't felt it coming':

'I found it sad, of course, that he had gone so far . . . And that he hadn't read the signs! That story he told about being in a different place every evening – I certainly don't do such things! I also got the impression that not all was well at home – that he left home to be alone. That certainly wouldn't happen in my case! He was probably way out of tune by then . . . I do hope someone will tell me if I seem to be going that way.'

She has arranged the management of the household in detail. A woman, who has been with the family for years, does the main work. Her partner and child<sup>7</sup> do a lot for themselves. An exception is cooking:

'Cooking is always my job – on Saturdays I go shopping for the whole week. And I love cooking. I prepare the meals and put them into the freezer. Every day they can take out what they need and add some fresh stuff, salads, and veggies.'

Despite her good management, Hannah recognizes acceleration and its effects. On a company-wide level burn-out has become a topic for debate and action. The view that you are considered weak if you can't keep up the pace has changed. At the moment firms are anxious to protect their employees, in order to prevent long-term absence through stress-related illnesses. Measures are being taken on a physical level: fitness rooms, sauna and massages in the workplace. Meanwhile, leisure sports are encouraged to compensate for the hectic working conditions. To be 'out of everything', not even to think about work, is considered essential for regaining the work spirit. The speed or the pace of work itself are not under debate. The measures all reflect the goal of work-related reproduction: get fresh for a new start.

Regular components of time management, like redesigning and planning, are also a taken-for-granted part of Hannah's life. On a 'day off' she will only work an hour or two, from home: opening and answering email, listening to voice mail messages and deciding about, sometimes shifting, priorities. These activities have their fixed times anyway – to perform the tasks at a fixed moment prevents unexpected disturbances. Of course, this is highly efficient and, in

addition, usually effective. But one might wonder how effective a professional can be if so many, sometimes far-reaching, decisions are taken within fixed time frames. The increase in rapid mail messages, teleconferences and ever-closer time limits for meetings and other forms of consultation suggest considerable fragmentation in work flows. Many fragments of information in one day, many small pieces of bigger decision processes flying by and requiring instant answers and solutions, suggest an image of juggling with too many balls. This may affect the quality of decision-making: managers can only make decisions on the basis of fragmented information because of the imposed speed. It takes 'too much time' (waiting, reflection, discussion, finding alternatives) to develop a broader base for decision-making.<sup>8</sup>

### Time Measurement

The way in which we 'handle' time is historically linked to modes of measuring time. In the development of the mechanization of production processes, our use of time has also become mechanized and more precise. New systems of time measurement were originally intended to produce more freedom or 'free time'. Efficiency expert (*avant la lettre*) Charles Taylor, who introduced the principles of *scientific management* at the beginning of the last century, did not do so with the intention of having people work faster or doing less attractive work. The latter is the ultimate effect of scientific management. His intention was to simplify production in a manner that would guarantee profit for the owners and leisure for the employees, as he thought that a more efficient mode of production would produce benefits for all. The ultimate effect was therefore the total opposite of the original intention, because production lines were made faster and technological improvements in production systems changed the industrial landscape once and for all. Nobody, including owners, gained leisure or free time. And as we know now, it was not only industrial firms which accepted these principles, as the development of 'service industries' illustrates (Koot and Sabelis, 2000).

As such, there is nothing wrong with modes of measuring time and thereby gaining better coordination. The problem is that, before long, new possibilities tend to become new necessities. A 'nice new device', which *can* be used, becomes a need, which everyone must have and use, within years, sometimes even faster. This is what has happened with the fax ('in' and 'out' within 15 years) and what is happening now, for instance, with email, voice mail and mobile phones. In addition, useful principles for one area tend to be introduced into other areas as well, without consideration of applicability, or improved *usefulness*. The history of personal planning devices illustrates this. For instance, planning principles have gained ground in the home. The split between work

and leisure originally occurred with the development of industries, causing people to move away from home for work. During the 19th century this was a cause of major conflicts over working time/s in relation to 'free' time (Thompson, 1967; Beckers, 1989; Ingold, 1995). Now a new development, but of a similar character, is occurring. The example of Hannah shows how her 'home time' is increasingly subject to rational planning. Though everybody 'knows' it cannot be done, work in the home has gradually become the subject of time management. Children of 4 and 5 years old actually need personal diaries. They have a well programmed plan of after-school activities, a schedule for babysitters, sporting clubs, music lessons and so on. Judith, Hannah's daughter, is totally used to this. We may even assume that children growing up in this manner are completely socialized into the custom of thorough planning – they may easily take *life management* for granted. There is hardly any time left for playing outside, not to mention the time and space for just being bored. Household technology has not in fact shortened the hours for household work.<sup>9</sup> But the relatively high 'status' attached to (paid) work has forced us to perform homely tasks in the time 'left over'. Shopping is increasingly done, as in Hannah's example, to cover a longer period of time, helped by the availability of the freezer and the microwave. Monday, washing day, has long been replaced by filling the ever-available washing machine any time we think of it. And if, perhaps, this all compresses time so much that we cannot cope with the household regime, there is a growing army of service companies. New companies have been launched (and these services are sometimes even provided by employers) for all the 'little' tasks, like waiting for the plumber, walking the dog, getting suits to and from the dry cleaner and even cooking your meals on your own stove.

The 'design' of our everyday life has become ever more dependent upon thorough planning. It seems as if the growing importance of our careers goes parallel with the need for refining our time systems. Yet, this refinement of control has its limits, especially with regard to our 'own' time. Hannah is lucky to have a smart daughter – but there is no space for the occurrence of, say, illness, unexpected changes in needs, or all kinds of unthinkable detours . . . What if her daughter suddenly appears to be skipping school, to be with the 'wrong' friends? Will there be any flexibility in the tight system? Only when things interrupt the smoothly planned schedule, do we notice the tightness of our structures. Or, to put it another way: we notice the imminent collapse of the house of cards. This is not only the case for the 'individual realm' of household management. We can see similar processes going on in related areas, in which household (or 'reproduction') principles are essential. A look at those not only illustrates the argument I have put forward here, it also shows how the rationality of managing time spreads into other areas of life and narrows one's view of efficiency and effectiveness.

### A Little Detour: Work and Care

Hannah's example, including the situation of her family, illustrates that time management is very efficient for certain areas of our lives, but for other areas it may just cause problems. To illustrate this, I would like to direct the focus to another area, which – in certain ways – resembles the realm of the household. Over the last few decades, rational time principles have been applied without reflection about their effectiveness in areas such as health care and other services. Care, like household management, cannot be caught in time frames; care tasks cannot be divided up in pieces and juggled accordingly.<sup>10</sup> For instance, in the debates over hospital care it is confusing that, like in the household, *some* tasks can be planned and measured in terms of rational productivity, because of their nature or the context in which they are performed. To a certain extent surgery or other treatments are activities which can be measured and planned, usually based on annual averages, with the implication that here also 'no irregularities come in between'. The problems occur in what happens, or should happen, before, around and after the act of treatment: waiting for someone to regain consciousness, personal attention and comfort, feeding and washing. These activities are considered time-consuming and 'not fitting' in the system, because they are not plannable and sometimes have a variable order. It is impossible to subjugate them to the fixed temporal pattern (duration, varying sequences) that is needed in order to impose a temporal structure and to follow the time = money principle underlying the efficiency rules. Increasingly in the care sector the 'around'-activities are considered 'awkward' because the (mainstream) development of the field is profit-orientated and therefore relies on (industrial) plannability. It is already cheaper to 'move' people who need a long period of recovery to a hotel and provide a (private) nurse there. The debates in the hospital sector in The Netherlands are moving in the direction of separating 'cure' from 'care'. It would be cheaper and more efficient to remove care and to concentrate on cure, which is considered the core task of the organization. This process of discrimination between plannable and unplannable types of work goes hand in hand with changing views of work-related status. The concrete change largely follows gendered patterns as women usually do the time-consuming and less plannable work. Efficiency and cure have a higher, and masculine, status compared with effectivity and care, which are traditionally linked to femininity. This status gap again puts pressure on the care sector to import industrial principles. If in the care sector some tasks cannot be performed any more because of lack of money (and also, increasingly, lack of skilled personnel, caused by decreasing status), people just have to be sent home earlier. There, finally, the efficiency hype meets the non-industrial buffer of (usually female) relatives – that is, if they are available and not caught up in their own work schedules, like Hannah.

## Reflections

At this point one may wonder if Hannah's story – the story of a chief executive in our times – offers a recipe for, or a caricature of, time management. Successes, personal development and an enjoyable career all have their costs, but it is certainly worthwhile. Professional measurement, thorough planning, compensation through sports and other hobbies can solve all problems of a timely nature, with the 'home front' as a buffer for unexpected disturbances. It all seems controllable, just like the books promised. But what is behind a good career? How vulnerable is the balance between work and free time? What exactly constitutes a good home front? For how long can people stretch their capabilities before reaching the edge of burn-out – or before somebody else tries to stop them by pointing to the imminent risks?

Looking at Hannah's biography from a slightly different angle, I find many signs pointing to far less linearity and plannability: routines, gaining certainty from rhythmicity, or even dealing with ambiguity by claiming control of the pace of her life. These signs are not apparent at first sight. But why, for instance, does she have to be well dressed before she can start the intercontinental teleconference? Why does she insist on always having the same suite in her hotel? Why is it so important to her that she can rely on her local supermarket knowing her by the automated customers' system, so that she does not have to spend much time shopping? Isn't it so that she can cope with the strains of her life by relying on certain rhythms and because her thoroughly organized free time is the buffer for unexpected intrusions? One may even suspect that she can lead this life only *because* working so hard prevents her from reflecting about her lifestyle.

To conclude, we can state that time management has long ceased to be linked only to production processes. Good work planning increasingly affects home planning as well, spreading the idea of rational plannability into areas of life where it was not intended to be applied and where it might do more damage than good. Time management provides *reliability* through the suggestion that we really can influence our future, in the sense of rational control. The problem is that the element of reliability is not questioned further. Can it be seen from a perspective other than the rational planning mode, which is implicit in the *management* of time? Hannah's story shows how technological possibilities soon turn into indispensable needs, preventing her from reflection about alternatives to the speeding up of the pace of her life. As soon as she has a connection to the Internet at home, the habit of working at home, if only for an hour or two, develops. Within months or weeks, 'the firm' relies on that habit and so it becomes a demand – a new condition for following a career path and an example for others. An element of allaying doubts about the rationality of her life is also present: Hannah's focus on work prevents her from *reflection* – if

things look as though they might go wrong, she expects others 'to warn her in time'. This line of thought could be drawn even further: it is hard to consider the finiteness of a job if identification with the firm is so strong ('we, the company' is a common way to express the commitment most senior managers have to their companies). Time management pervades Hannah's life; all corners are well filled. And that is the way to survive, although it increases acceleration. To control one's time in detail suggests and confirms the idea of 'the one best way', thereby endowing it with value standards which, unfortunately, some of us cannot meet. But because this is considered the 'rule of the game', not meeting the standards is viewed as a personal choice or individual inadequacy, in time management literature as well as in the everyday practice of organizations, when chief executives stress the element of 'personal choice'. Time management has thus become one of the symptoms of the ideology of control and a very tricky one at that. Combined with the latest models for development of 'individual time profiles' (also controllable because they suggest that 'you can or should do something about it') it bears the risk of a total loss of individual responsibility, paradoxically combined with the idea of total control. If the image of manageable time persists, the (social) necessity of surrendering and adapting to that image will not be far off. In the end (and this is also seen in the new time management literature), the choices are limited, conveying the message to 'take or leave the one best way'. Possible advantages of a more holistic view of time, in which reliance could be addressed by different time views for different problems (acknowledging rhythms, meeting the various paces of, for instance, work and household processes), seem to vanish in the sewers of industrial, clock-time based hegemony.

### Notes

A preliminary version of this paper (in Dutch) was published in *Lover*, a magazine for feminism, culture and science (edited by IIAV: International Information Centre and Archive for Women's Movement, Amsterdam) 26(4), December 1999. Translation by the author, revision by Phyllis Vangelder, to whom I am very grateful for her involvement and support.

1. The main research has been published in Koot and Sabelis (2000).
2. The reason for choosing the story of one of the two women (out of 15 managers) in the research is that Hannah was most explicit in addressing the 'problems' of combining work and household from a time management perspective. Obviously there is a gender issue here as well. We took that as an underlying condition and decided to take up its consequences in future research.
3. The original title of Mackenzie's book was *The Time Trap* (1962). I used the 1981 Dutch version.
4. Although I am aware of the first meaning of 'to manage' as 'to control' in any

language, in English the term also covers meanings like 'to cope'. Adopting 'time management' as a loan word seems to produce the side effect of the loss of multiple meanings.

5. Economist Martin Held is a member of the Tutzing Zeitakademie (Time Academy). This is an interdisciplinary group concerned with time topics related to ecology, politics, etc. The group organizes conferences and (international) exchange meetings once or twice every year to share new views and insights. It has published several books. For an overview of the Tutzing Project see also Hofmeister (1997).
6. The name 'Hannah' is a pseudonym. It was the wish of some of the managers in the 'Survival Research' to be presented anonymously, so we did that for all of them. Methodologically this has turned out to be important: they are real people, but not recognizable as individuals. This served, inter alia, for openness/frankness in the research project and strengthened the focus on 'coping strategies' instead of comparisons with the image of managers which some people have, for instance, from the media.
7. Judith was 12 years old by the time we got to know each other in 1999 and on the verge of entering secondary education.
8. As far as I know the relationship between decision-making and shortening time frames has not yet been researched. In another part of my research, I elaborate on the topic of 'compression' in depth (Sabelis, 2001).
9. See for instance the wonderful book on this topic by Ruth Schwarz-Cowan (1989). Here the shift from household work as a communal, family matter towards a task for 'women only' is depicted beautifully, especially because the relationship with industrialization (and the split between home and work space) is included. For the topic of colonization of the life-world, and the intensification of planning in leisure, see also Mommaas (2000).
10. Compare for instance Davies (1994) and (1996). In The Netherlands, Jeanne de Bruijn has also addressed this topic, as well as Gabriella Paolucci in Italy.

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